

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 18, 1999

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A NEW "COMMUNITY COURT" IS COMING TO SAN DIEGO

EARLY INTERVENTION, NEIGHBORHOOD BASED PROSECUTION GRANT RECEIVED

Today, the U.S. Department of Justice awarded the San Diego City Attorney's Office one of six grants in the entire country to establish a Community Court in the Mid-City area of San Diego. The principle behind community court is to bring the resources of the criminal justice system and the community together in the neighborhood where the crimes are occurring. "This is one of the most exciting grant applications the City Attorney's Office has ever pursued because it brings together the courts, prosecutors, public defenders, social services, law enforcement, and the neighborhood groups to deal with misdemeanor quality of life crimes in the neighborhoods where they have the most impact," said City Attorney Casey Gwinn. "It will allow us to bring together the concept of neighborhood policing with the concept of neighborhood prosecution in the areas of Code Enforcement, drugs, gangs, graffiti, theft, and a variety of other criminal offenses that impact our inner city neighborhoods," said Assistant City Attorney Gael Strack.

The grant for \$225,000 for 18 months will allow the City to develop and implement a Community Court with the cooperation of many agencies. "We look forward to working with the courts, the San Diego Police Department, the Public Defender, and community organizations to make this a national model for community outreach," said Gwinn.

Assistant City Attorney Gael Strack and Grant Coordinator Mary Ann Stepnowsky worked closely with the Police Department, the Public Defender, and many community organizations in putting together the City's proposal. Nearly 100 jurisdictions across the country were vying for the six grants given out by the Department of Justice.

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